

February



National Health Observances



Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

American Heart Month

Sponsor: The American Heart Association

(<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4441>) 

American Heart Month is a time to battle cardiovascular disease and educate Americans on what we can do to live heart-healthy lives.

Heart disease, including stroke, is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States.

You are at higher risk of heart disease if you are:

- A woman age 55 or older
- A man age 45 or older
- Or a person with a family history of early heart disease

Heart disease can be prevented. To keep your heart healthy:

- Watch your weight.
- Quit smoking and stay away from secondhand smoke.
- Control your cholesterol and blood pressure.
- If you drink alcohol, drink only in moderation.
- Get active and eat healthy.
- Talk to your doctor about taking aspirin every day if you are a man over the age of 45 or a woman over 55.
- Manage stress.

Get the Word Out

Sample Media and/or Newsletter or Listserv Announcement

Cut and paste this text into your newsletter, listserv, or press release. Add local details and quotes from your organization.

Heart disease kills an estimated 630,000 Americans each year. It's the leading cause of death for both men and women. To prevent heart disease and increase awareness of its affects, **[your organization]** is proudly participating in American Heart Month. Locally, **[fill in statistics]** are affected by heart disease.

In the United States, the most common type of heart disease is coronary artery disease (CAD), which can lead to a heart attack. You can greatly reduce your risk for CAD through lifestyle changes and, in some cases, medication.

- Add details about your local activities.
- Include quote from your organization.

You can make healthy changes to lower your risk of developing heart disease. Controlling and preventing risk factors is also important for people who already have heart disease.

- Watch your weight.
- Quit smoking and stay away from secondhand smoke.
- Control your cholesterol and blood pressure.
- If you drink alcohol, drink only in moderation.
- Get active and eat healthy.
- Talk to your doctor about taking aspirin every day if you are a man over the age of 45, or a woman past menopause.
- Manage stress.

For more information, visit [insert your organization information].

Is your organization on Twitter? Send tweets.

Sample tweets: Tips for a Healthy Heart

The messages below are sample tweets. To send them via Twitter, click on the URL link provided after the “Tweet this message” phrase. Or, copy the message and paste it to your Twitter Stream and click post.

- Did you know? Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. #nho [Tweet this message:
<http://twitter.com/home?status=Did+you+know%3F+Heart+disease+is+the+leading+cause+of+death+for+both+men+and+women+in+the+United+States.+%23nho%20>]
- Q. Who's at risk for heart disease? A. A woman age 55 or older or a man age 45 or older: <http://bit.ly/DJ2eY>. #nho [Tweet this message:
<http://twitter.com/home?status=Q.+Who+is+at+risk+for+heart+disease%3F+A.+A+woman+age+55+or+older+or+a+man+age+45+or+older:+http://bit.ly/DJ2eY.+%23nho%20>]

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- Encourage loved ones to pump up their heart by getting active with a free e-card: <http://bit.ly/d8IWp>. #nho [Tweet this message:
<http://twitter.com/home?status=Encourage+loved+ones+to+pump+up+their+heart+by+getting+active+with+a+free+e-card:+http://bit.ly/d8IWp.+%23nho>]
- Cheat Sheet: Questions to ask your doctor if you have high blood pressure: <http://bit.ly/7o8OEI>. #nho [Tweet this message:
<http://twitter.com/home?status=Cheat+Sheet:+Questions+to+ask+your+doctor+if+you+have+high+blood+pressure:+http://bit.ly/7o8OEI.+%23nho>]
- Manage your cholesterol—Easier said than done? Watch this presentation from @medlineplus4you for help: <http://bit.ly/6SIIqp>. #nho [Tweet this message:
<http://twitter.com/home?status=Manage+your+cholesterol+Easier+said+than+done?+Watch+this+presentation+from+@medlineplus4you+for+help:+http://bit.ly/6SIIqp.+%23nho>]
- Planning a grocery store trip this weekend? Pump up your heart health by choosing foods that are low in sodium (salt). #nho [Tweet this message:
[http://twitter.com/home?status=Planning+a+grocery+store+trip+this+weekend?+Pump+up+your+heart+health+by+choosing+foods+that+are+low+in+sodium+\(salt\).+%23nho](http://twitter.com/home?status=Planning+a+grocery+store+trip+this+weekend?+Pump+up+your+heart+health+by+choosing+foods+that+are+low+in+sodium+(salt).+%23nho)]
- Did you know? You should get your blood pressure checked starting at age 18! Curious why? More info: <http://bit.ly/yqueX>. #nho [Tweet this message:
<http://twitter.com/home?status=Did+you+know?+You+should+get+your+blood+pressure+checked+starting+at+age+18!+Curious+why?+More+info:+http://bit.ly/yqueX.+%23nho>]

- Q. What is heart failure? A. It's when the heart cannot pump blood the way it should to the rest of the body. #nho [Tweet this message:
<http://twitter.com/home?status=Q.+What+is+heart+failure?+A.+It+is+when+the+heart+cannot+pump+blood+the+way+it+should+to+the+rest+of+the+body.+%23nho>]
- Did you know? The signs of a heart attack differ between men and women? Learn more: <http://bit.ly/rtMKA>. #nho [Tweet this message:
<http://twitter.com/home?status=Did+you+know?+The+signs+of+a+heart+attack+differ+between+men+and+women?+Learn+more:+http://bit.ly/rtMKA.+%23nho>]
- Are you a woman over 55? Talk to your doctor about taking aspirin to reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke: <http://bit.ly/1IvaOF>. #nho [Tweet this message:
<http://twitter.com/home?status=Are+you+a+woman+over+55?+Talk+to+your+doctor+about+taking+aspirin+to+reduce+your+risk+of+heart+attack+and+stroke:+http://bit.ly/1IvaOF.+%23nho>]

Send e-cards

- healthfinder.gov: Eat Healthy
(<http://healthfinder.gov/ecards/DisplayCard.aspx?CardID=6>)
- healthfinder.gov: Quit Smoking
(<http://healthfinder.gov/ecards/DisplayCard.aspx?CardID=13>)
- healthfinder.gov: Be Active
(<http://healthfinder.gov/ecards/DisplayCard.aspx?CardID=18>)
- healthfinder.gov: Get Screened
(<http://healthfinder.gov/ecards/DisplayCard.aspx?CardID=10>)
- healthfinder.gov: Watch Your Weight
(<http://healthfinder.gov/ecards/DisplayCard.aspx?CardID=17>)
- CDC: Heart Health Fashion
(<http://www2c.cdc.gov/ecards/message/message.asp?cardid=260&category=173>)
- CDC: Know Your Blood Pressure Numbers
(<http://www2c.cdc.gov/eCards/message/message.asp?cardid=309>)
- CDC: Salt Intake
(<http://www2c.cdc.gov/ecards/message/message.asp?cardid=284&category=173>)
- View more E-cards (<http://healthfinder.gov/ecards/cards.aspx>)

Post a Web Badge

Add this free Web badge (<http://healthfinder.gov/nho/nhoBadges.aspx#feb>) to your Web site, blog, or social networking profile to show your support for American Heart Month.

Get Involved

Take action to promote heart health.

1. Celebrate National Wear Red Day (February 5, 2010) to raise awareness about women and heart disease. Encourage everyone in your community to wear red on National Wear Red Day and use the tools provided in the toolkit to learn how they can protect themselves and their loved ones from heart disease. Visit www.goredforwomen.org (<http://www.goredforwomen.org/>)  for more information.
2. Host an American Heart Month event at local schools, health centers, libraries, etc. Work with local recreation and fitness centers to spread the word about the importance of physical activity to prevent heart disease.
3. Contact your local Red Cross to host a CPR training event in your community. Urge local community members to learn CPR and AED (Automated External Defibrillator). These skills can help save the life of someone who has sudden cardiac arrest.
4. Host a 20-minute group walk around your office at lunch time.
5. Conduct a cooking demonstration using a heart-healthy recipe.

Adapted from the American Heart Association.

Contact the American Heart Association

(<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4441>)  at inquiries@heart.org for more information and materials.

Related Tools on [healthfinder.gov](#)

- Drink Alcohol Only in Moderation
(<http://healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=16>)
- Eat Healthy (<http://healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=21>)
- Get Active (<http://healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=22>)
- Get Your Blood Pressure Checked
(<http://healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=11>)

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- Get Your Cholesterol Checked
(<http://healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=14>)
- Keep Your Heart Healthy
(<http://healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=84>)
- Manage Stress (<http://healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=45>)
- Quit Smoking (<http://healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=24>)
- Reduce Your Risk of Stroke
(<http://healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=81>)
- Take Steps to Prevent Type 2 Diabetes
(<http://healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=73>)
- Talk to Your Doctor about Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm
(<http://healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=52>)
- Talk With Your Doctor About Taking Aspirin Every Day
(<http://www.healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicID=10>)
- Watch Your Weight
(<http://healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=25>)

Personal Health Tools

- Adult BMI Calculator
(http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/adult_bmi/english_bmi_calculator/bmi_calculator.html)
- Alcohol Use Test (<http://getfit.samhsa.gov/Alcohol/TestsAlcoholUseTest.aspx>)
- Assess Your Physical Activity (<http://www.mypyramidtracker.gov/>)
- Be Active Your Way Widget (<http://www.healthfinder.gov/widgets/>)
- Daily Food and Activity Diary
(http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/diaryint.htm)
- Enter your age and sex into myhealthfinder
(<http://www.healthfinder.gov/prevention/myHealthfinder.aspx>) on the healthfinder.gov (<http://www.healthfinder.gov/>) homepage to get personalized screening recommendations.
- For Your Heart Survey (<http://www.womenshealth.gov/ForYourHeart/>)
- Heart Healthy Workout Quiz
(<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=947>) 
- Interactive Facts About Smoking Tutorial
(<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorials/smokingthefacts/htm/index.htm>)

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- Interactive Heart Attack Tutorial
(<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorials/heartattack/htm/index.htm>)
- My Blood Pressure Wallet Card (PDF - 664KB)
(<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/hbpwallet.pdf>)

More Information (Health A-Z)

- Heart Diseases (<http://healthfinder.gov/scripts/SearchContext.asp?topic=391>)

Resources

- The American Heart Association
(<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4441>) 
American Heart Month Sponsor
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/library/toolkit/index.htm>)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Heart Disease: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) (<http://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/faqs.htm>)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Quit Smoking
(http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/index.htm)
- Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health, Heart Disease 101
(<http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=3&lvid=126>)
- Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health, Fact Sheet About Heart Disease (<http://www.womenshealth.gov/faq/heart-disease.cfm>)
- Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health, For Your Heart Survey (<http://www.womenshealth.gov/foryourheart/>)
- Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health, Heart Health and Stroke (<http://www.womenshealth.gov/heart-stroke/>)
- National Institutes of Health, National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, Heart and Vascular Diseases (<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/index.htm>)
- National Institutes of Health, National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, The Heart Truth Campaign (<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/educational/hearttruth/>)
- National Institutes of Health, SeniorHealth, Heart Attack
(<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/heartattack/toc.html>)
- National Institutes of Health, SeniorHealth, High Blood Cholesterol
(<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/highbloodcholesterol/toc.html>)

- National Institutes of Health, SeniorHealth, High Blood Pressure (<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/highbloodpressure/toc.html>)
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Aspirin for Reducing Your Risk of Heart Attack and Stroke: KNOW THE FACTS (<http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/EmergencyPreparedness/BioterrorismandDrugPreparedness/ucm133431.htm>)
- U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs' Resources for Veterans and the Public—Heart Disease (http://www.prevention.va.gov/Resources_Heart_Disease_for_Veterans_and_the_Public.asp)

Tips to Plan a National Health Observance

Each National Health Observance (NHO) presents an opportunity to educate the public, energize co-workers and community members, and promote healthy behaviors. The NHO toolkits (<http://www.healthfinder.gov/nho/>) have the information and tools you need to get started.

Use the tips in this guide to plan a successful health promotion event.

Planning:

Planning is critical to the success of any outreach effort. Contact the NHO sponsoring organization several months ahead of time to request up-to-date information and materials. (Contact information for each month's sponsoring organization is provided in each toolkit).

- Consider enlisting the help of a community partner to help you plan and promote your event.
- Meet with those who will be valuable in your event coordination. To get started, sit down with potential partners, such as local businesses, local government agencies, key leaders, organizations, and media partners who share an interest in the NHO.
- Recruit volunteers, speakers, and community liaisons.
- Develop new or adapt existing materials to distribute at the event.
- Be sure to get them printed and/or copied in advance.
- Conduct a run-through before the event.

Promoting:

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Develop a publicity and media outreach plan. Designate a media contact from your planning team and make sure they are available to answer questions and follow up on media requests.

- Start by creating a local media list.
- Use local access television, radio, newspaper, and community calendars to promote your event.
- Post event announcements on your Web site. Encourage your partners to post similar announcements on their Web sites.
- Send a press release.
- Engage the media by offering a spokesperson from your organization or the community.
- Post flyers or posters throughout the community: on bulletin boards at local community centers, places of worship, the library, post office, local schools, recreation centers, clinics, pharmacies, stores, and businesses.
- Send flyers to each participating organization for distribution.

On the Day of the Event:

- Set up tables, chairs, and a check-in table prior to your event.
- Make plenty of sign-in sheets. Create a separate sign-in sheet for members of the media.
- Don't forget the refreshments!
- Make signs to direct participants and reporters to your event.

Tracking Media Coverage:

If you are distributing information to the media, plan ahead of time to track your coverage. There are both paid and free resources to track media coverage.

Free media tracking resources search for news articles based on your specific search term(s) and a date range. Some tracking services will send automatic e-mail alerts to notify you when your event and/or keywords are mentioned.

Paid media tracking typically captures a wider range of media stories (both print and online) than free Internet search tools. Paid media tracking sources search within certain locations, news outlet types, and/or specific dates. Some paid media tracking tools offer e-mail alerts and the ability to search archived Web and print news; they also allow users to tailor searches to obtain the most relevant media stories. Other paid media services monitor all forms of social media, including blogs, top video and image-sharing sites, forums, opinion sites, mainstream online media, and Twitter.

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Be sure to share media coverage with your community partners, stakeholders, and all those who helped you plan and promote your event. Post a summary of media coverage on your organization's Web site. No matter the size or success of your event, remember that your efforts are key to educating the public about important health issues.

Last but not least, share your feedback and results with us here at healthfinder.gov. You can contact us at info@nhic.org or send us a tweet @healthfinder (<http://twitter.com/Healthfinder>) .



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